

Time to follow The Twelve's lead

The Twelve Hotel near Galway was one of Ireland's first to welcome four-legged beings into its plush corridors. And it certainly has the 'bow wow' factor

REVIEW

BY LAURA MCMULLAN
laura.mcmullan@jpress.co.uk
@NLFeatures

As we opened the door to our gorgeous suite in The Twelve Hotel, Galway, there were whoops of delight as we seized upon the delightful treats that had been thoughtfully left in a goodie bag for us.

The shrieks, however, were from our pair of pampered pooches, Brody and Lucy, who were extremely excited when we doled out the doggie dental sticks and squeaky bones, giving both a curious sniff, before turning their attention to the business of investigating every corner of our new home for the night.

We had decided to treat them to a summer holiday, and so booked the luxurious Twelve Hotel, famous for the warm welcome it gives its four legged guests as well as its visitors of the human kind.

Manager Fergus O'Halloran is a dog lover himself; he reportedly came up with the idea to open a pet friendly hotel in Ireland after he travelled in the USA, where he discovered that



One of the spacious suites at The Twelve

dog friendly cafes and so on were commonplace.

Needless to say, when the doors of The Twelve opened in 2007, the fact that residents were allowed to bring their beloved pets went down a treat, and in high season the hotel's two pet friendly suites are booked every night.

And this summer, proving they have their paw on the pulse as much as ever, they launched an exciting Secret Life of Pets two night package, which includes two nights' bed and breakfast, a welcome package, and the option to book your canine in for some spa treatments

at a nearby doggie parlour, Bubbles and Barks.

We endeavoured to check out this delight later; first, we were keen to settle into our suite, following the long schlep from Co Antrim to beautiful Barna, the scenic seaside village just a few miles west of Galway city, and our home for the night.

Amused onlookers and residents smiled at us as we checked in, and our canines waved their tails right back in response, as we made our way up to our room, which was the furthest thing from the dog house you could imagine.

Ultramodern and decorated



FACT FILE

***The Secret Life of Pets package is available at The Twelve Hotel and includes two nights bed and breakfast for two adults and one pet, your pet's welcome package and the option to book your pet in for some spa treats as an extra. Pet Package price at The Twelve from €400.**

***Log on to www.thetwelvehotel. ie for more information on staying at the hotel**

in soothing shades of green, grey and beige, it was divided into two; a living area, complete with sofas, a coffee table, mini bar, and water and food bowls for the dogs, as well as a cosy blanket, and - most adorably of all - a special little fairy door, which our pups thoroughly investigated.

We had not one, but two 26in LCD televisions, much to the delight of the elder of our dogs, Lucy, who, unbelievably, is a huge fan of the box, a super king size bed with Sealy mattress and fluffy, hypo-allergenic goose down duvets (needless to say,

Our room was the furthest thing from the dog house

we enjoyed the best night's sleep ever), and alarm clock with iPod docking station, to play soothing tunes to our pets when we had to leave them (Radio 2 is normally their station of choice on the 'wireless'), plus all the usual essentials such as hairdryer, ironing board and a safe.

All this, plus our little welcome bag for the dogs, which included a welcome 'certificate', and their own Four Legged Friend's Menu, which included delights such as Pup Cakes (peanut butter treats), Tom Cat's Favorite (a selection of seafood), and The Pooch-ini, a custom made dessert with pet biscuits, peanut butter sauce and vanilla custard!

All available via a quick call to room service.

We were also given details about nearby places where the four of us could stretch our legs, such as Barna Woods and Barna Beach, and since we had a couple of hours to spare before dinner, we decided to harness up, and hit the pavements.

We found Barna to be a bustling, friendly little suburb; a huddle of shops, supermarkets and restaurants, and behind them, a sprawl of houses.

Later, we prepared for din-

ner, as our pups sprawled across their blankets, dog tired after their little legs had carried them everywhere they needed to go.

And that's the other fantastic thing about The Twelve as a pet friendly destination; our room was literally just a few steps away from where we were booked in to eat that evening, Upstairs @ West Restaurant, so there was no fretting on the part of either dog or owner about leaving each other for too long.

This award winning restaurant is chic and stylish, with cosy booths, smooth dark wood, and flattering lighting. But more importantly, the food is outstanding.

As we finally departed The Twelve and Barna the following morning, sated after an outstanding breakfast, I thought of the famous quote by Del Allen, about this wonderful part of the world: "There is something sleeping in my breast, that awakens only in the west, there is something on the heart of me, that needs the west to set it free."

For us, our stay in the west had been just that - a much needed dose of freedom from the shackles of daily life, and the four of us had enjoyed our trip thoroughly.



